

SEP 29 1966

DATE: September 28, 1966

To : Professor Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics

FROM : Dean Robert R. Sears
Humanities and Sciences

SUBJECT: Terman Gifted Study Files

Dear Josh:

As you may know, I am one of the two curators of the data for the Terman Gifted Child Study. The other is Lee Cronbach of the School of Education. We are presently faced with a decision point in the handling of the corpus of that study.

Melita Oden, who has been connected with the study since 1927, has retired as of this last August. She is still here and in good health, and is willing to do some final clean-up work on a voluntary basis. There is not an emergency, therefore, but we are at a point in history where some final decisions about the disposition of the study must be made.

During the years since Terman's death, Quinn McNemar, Cronbach and I, together with Fred McDonald of the School of Education, and several outside consultants, have been trying to decide what disposition to make. We have concluded there is no further end to be gained by continuing the existence of the study in its open form. In other words, our inclination is to make sure we have all of the coded data on a couple of computer tapes and then destroy all of the original files. The purpose of such destruction has mainly to do with the need to maintain permanent protection of privacy on the part of the subjects. There is also the consideration of storage space, for the files take up two very long banks of filing cabinets. We would plan to have a final follow-up in about eight or nine years, when the subjects are all at approximately retirement age. That material would then be coded and added to the tapes and the office permanently closed. In the meantime we would maintain a part-time secretary who has been active on the project for many years and can serve to maintain a file of current addresses.

I am sending this note to you because you are probably the only person who has any immediate and lively interest in the data of the project. As you can imagine, data collected by many different forms and blanks over a period of 45 years probably never could be completely and finally coded. Nearly

everything is on punched cards, however, although Melita tells me that you recently asked for some data on birth weights that happened not to be coded. Neither she nor I can guess whether there might be other non-coded facts in the data that would be of interest to you (or hypothetically to someone else in the future). But our guess is that there is very little remaining information that is codeable that has not already been put on the cards. On the otherhand, I wanted you to know about the situation and have a chance to think about any possible usage you might wish to make of further data before we perform the final destruction. When you've had a chance to think about this will you please call me on extension 2275?

Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bob", written in dark ink.

Robert R. Sears, Dean
School of Humanities and Sciences

RRS/ss